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HEADQUARTERS, U. S. ARMY SECTION
MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP, VIETNAM
Saigon, Vietnam

MAGAR-OT (OP)

1 April 1962

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 5

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TO: See Distribution

1. GENERAL: A four battalion operation under the command of a division was conducted in Northern Tay Ninh Province during the period 9-11 March 1962.
2. UNITS PARTICIPATING: Four battalions, including one airborne battalion, one reconnaissance company and one Ranger company supported by one 155mm Howitzer battery all under the command of a Division Tactical CP took part in the operation.
3. MISSION: The mission of the operation was to conduct a reconnaissance in force to seek out and destroy any VC forces or installations in the area of operations.
4. CONCEPT: The four participating battalions were formed as two Task Forces, two battalions in each. One TF was to move from Bo Tuc in Northern Tay Ninh Sector to the East to link up with the other TF moving to the West from Hon Quan in Binh Duong Sector. The operation was a convenient way of extracting the two battalions from Bo Tuc which had taken part in the relief operation there a few days earlier.
5. RESULTS: There were no casualties on either side. No contact with VC was established during the operation.
6. LESSONS LEARNED:

a. BATTALION AND LARGER SIZED "SWEEP" OPERATIONS ARE GENERALLY UNPRODUCTIVE AND WASTEFUL IN TERMS OF MANPOWER, EFFORT AND MATERIALS EXPENDED. At the direction of IFF Corps, this sweep type operation was hurriedly planned and executed. It is recognized by the division commander as an ineffective technique especially in jungle areas. Its use to withdraw the units from remote areas, even though terrain intelligence is gained, should be avoided in the future as wasteful and unproductive.

b. INTELLIGENCE OF THE ENEMY AND TERRAIN MUST BE TIMELY, DETAILED AND ACCURATE. In this operation, planning was quickly completed and lacked specific definition of VC concentrations or installations. It was based on a "suspicion" that VC were in the area. In this sub-limited war, only when

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intelligence is accurate, detailed and timely can operations of any description be successful. While it is possible that the primary concern was the withdrawal of the units from Bo Tuc quickly and securely, the presence of these units in this area might have easily produced more imaginative plans which could have killed many VC.

e. VC ALMOST INVARIABLY AVOID ENGAGEMENT WITH LARGE RVNAF UNITS.
Battalions or larger units seldom succeed in provoking a VC engagement, since VC know strong RVNAF units will almost invariably defeat them.

7. This is for your information and guidance.

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